

Message Text

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ACTION OPIC-06

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 ISO-00 EB-07 L-02 PRS-01 COME-00 AID-05

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FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8581

UNCLAS LAGOS 02915

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OPIC, EINV, NI

SUBJECT: OPIC BRIEFINGS

REF: (A) STATE 63237: (B) LAGOS 2396: (C) STATE 040179

1. IN CONTRAST TO SUGGESTION IN REF: (A) FOR PUBLICIZING OPIC BRIEFINGS, WE HAD PLANNED TO PLAY DOWN RATHER THAN SEEK OUT PUBLICITY, IN BELIEF IT IS NOT ESSENTIAL TO PURPOSES OF OPIC MISSION AND COULD BE COUNTER PRODUCTIVE IN U.S./OPIC RELATIONS WITH FMG.

2. AS STATE/OPIC AWARE, FMG OPTED FOR OPIC AGREEMENT WITH MIXED FEELINGS. INVESTMENT GUARANTEE/INDURANCE CONCEPT IS FUNDAMENTALLY DISTASTEFUL TO ELEMENTS WITHIN FMG, AND ALTHOUGH FMG SET ASIDE THAT DISTASTE IN BELIEF OPIC AGREEMENT WOULD ENCOURAGE U.S. INVESTMENT, THERE IS ALSO SKEPTICISM WITHIN FMG ABOUT PROBABILITY OF RESULTING INVESTMENT INFLOW. FMG ALSO CHOSE TO DOWNPLAY ITS PUBLICITY ABOUT OPIC AGREEMENT (AND STYLED IT "RENEWAL" OF EARLIER AID AGREEMENT) IN ORDER AVOID ENCOURAGEMENT TO OTHER GOVERNMENTS TO SEEK SIMILAR AGREEMENT IF OPIC TEAM WAS COMING WITH CONCRETE INVESTMENT PROPOSALS TO PUT TO NIGERIANS WE WOULD CERTAINLY ADVOCATE MAXIMUM PUBLICITY, BUT AS WE UNDERSTAND IT, THAT IS NOT THE CASE.

4. AS WE UNDERSTAND AND HEARTILY ENDORSE PURPOSE OF VISIT, IT IS TO BRIEF RESPONSIBLE OFFICIALS IN FMG (AND AMEMBASSY) ON OPIC PROGRAMS AND PROCEDURES, AND TO MEET AND DISCUSS INVESTMENT

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CLIMATE AND OPPORTUNITIES WITH REPRESENTATIVES NIGERIAN

AND AMERICAN BANKING AND BUSINESS COMMUNITIES. WE THINK THIS IS IMPORTANT FIRST STEP IN PIC RELATIONS WITH NIGERIA, AND BELIEVE IT CAN BEST BE ACCOMPLISHED BY PLAYING IT STRAIGHT, THAT IS, BY CALLS ON RESPONSIBLE FMG OFFICIALS AND LUNCH AND DRINKS MEETINGS WITH SELECTED AND INVITED OFFICIALS, BANKERS AND BUSINESSMENT, AS DISCUSSED WITH HOEVELER AND OUTLINED REFTEL (B)

5. IN OUR VIEW PUBLICITY GOING BEYOND STRAIGHT NEWS COVERAGE WOULD RUN RISK OF AROUSING DORMANT FMG SENSITIVITIES ABOUT GUARANTEE/INSURANCE CONCEPT, AND/OR OF GENERATING FALSE EXPECTATIONS OF U.S. INVESTMENT (AS HAPPENED IN FEDDLOT CASE IN BENUE PLATEAU STATE) AND SO REINFORCING SKEPTICS WITHIN

6. WE THINK IMPORTANT VISIT MOST LIKELY TO ACHIEVE ITS PURPOSE IF EMPHASIS PUT ON PROFESSIONAL RATHER THAN PUBLIC RELATIONS ASPECTS, AND WE WOULD LIKE TO URGE THAT COURSE.

7. APPRECIATE STATE/OPIC COMMENTS AS SOONS AS POSSIBLE SO WE CAN GET ON WITH ARRANGEMENTS.
CROSBY

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